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ABSTRACT

This paper presents an empirical case study on the expansion of education in China (excluding Taiwan) since the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949 to 1995. The study uses an estimation of the national primary school enrollment rates from 1949-1951 and that in the period of "the Cultural Revolution," and uses the available official statistics of China in other years. The paper argues that currently available theories about expansion of education, mainly based on the observation of western countries, cannot be well applied to this general pattern. Factors influencing China's unique educational development include economics, politics, and public policy. The paper offers an exploratory view of the general pattern of educational development and its implications for the future. (Contains 25 references.) (EH)

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THE EXPANSION OF EDUCATION IN CHINA: 1949-1995

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THE EXPANSION OF EDUCATION IN CHINA: 1949-1995

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Abstract

Researchers have conducted many studies and advanced a number of distinct theories for the last two decades to account for the worldwide phenomenon of the expansion of education. Nonetheless, few studies in this line have been done on Chinese education, the largest system of education with a special social context in the world. This study is intended to present an empirical case study on the expansion of education in China. Through getting an estimation of the national primary school enrollment rates from 1949-1951 and that in the period of "the Cultural Revolution" and using the available official statistics of China in other years, the author obtains a general pattern of the expansion of education in China from 1949 to 1995. Furthermore, with analyzing main factors including economy, politics and public (educational) policy that affected the process of educational expansion in different periods of China, the author argues that currently available theories about the expansion of education mainly based on the observation of western countries can not be well applied to this general pattern. An exploratory explanation of this general pattern and its implication by the author is given at the end of the article.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid and universal expansion of education, not only in western countries, but also in developing countries, is one of the most important phenomena in the world after World War II. Since at least the later 1970s, this phenomenon has received much attention from the scholars of education, sociology, and other related fields. Researchers have made many studies and advanced, directly or indirectly, a number of distinct theories to account for the expansion of education.

Two things are noteworthy. On the one hand, some scholars seemed to have tried, intentionally or unintentionally, to pursue an all-embracing explanation which can apply to the educational expansion cross-nationally and even world-widely (e.g., see Meyer, Ramirez, Rubinson, & Boli-Bennett, 1977; Craig, 1981). On the other hand, as Archer (1982) pointed out, although there have been so many theories, "they all represent general explanations which pinpoint some particular variable or process as universally for expansion", hence empirical case studies of the process of educational expansion remain wanting (also see Plank, 1987).

This paper presents an empirical case study with the intention to examine the process of the expansion of education in China (excluding Taiwan) since the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949 to 1995. Three reasons seem particularly important for the study.

First, China is the largest country in terms of population, and has the biggest system of education in the world. In 1995, China had 1.21 billion people, 196 million school students; among them, 132 million were in primary schools (The National Bureau of Statistics of China, 1996).

Second, China has its own long-standing cultural tradition, and in addition, the new China has adopted a special political and social system since its foundation on October 1, 1949, not only very different from western capitalist countries, but also in fact strikingly different from other socialist countries like the former Soviet Union and East European countries. In short, China has a very special social and political environment for the expansion of education.

Third, because of many factors, there were fewer interchanges for a long time between China and other (particularly western) countries, especially before 1980 when it introduced an "open policy". That in part results in the fact that foreign scholars often do not have and know much, let alone enough, information about China, hence there have been less studies than there could and should be on Chinese education done by international researchers. For instances, both of the two oft-referred studies, Craig's (1981) *The Expansion of Education* and Meyer, et al.'s (1977) *The World Educational Expansion, 1950-1970* , excluded China. Meanwhile, in some studies including or specially focusing on China, the explanation and conclusions were more or less not so information-based and naturally not so sound. For example, Burris (1990) argued that "Change in Chinese education has been the result of struggle, and those struggles have been and continue to be political" (p.152). Though it is beyond the intention of this paper to make an overall comment on a special study, we can see at the end of this study that to great extent such a general conclusion is oversimplified. As a matter of fact,

Zachariah (1979) once pointed out that "much of the western reporting of recent events in China is colored by western notions (of modernization)".

The remainder of this paper is in four sections. I shall, as researchers usually do, use the primary school enrollment rate as the main indicator of the expansion of education in all of these sections. Section 1 briefly reviews some theoretical frameworks that have been developed or employed by different researchers to explain the expansion of education around the world. Section 2 examines the evidence, and then presents a general picture of educational expansion in China from 1949 to 1995. Section 3 analyzes the main factors that affected the process of educational expansion in China in different periods. The final section, by taking into account the theoretical frameworks reviewed in section 1 and the discussion and explanations on Chinese educational expansion in sections 2 and 3 together, gives some general conclusions.

SOME THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Although different researchers of the expansion of education often have different classifications of the theories according to different criteria and purposes, I shall mainly employ four frameworks and make a brief description, which might to some extent be served as theoretical background for this study. It is important to add that the frameworks presented below are by no means complete or totally independent of one another. However, readers who are interested in knowing more about the research done in this area might consult Craig (1981), or Archer (1982), and more recent studies such as Meyer, Ramirez, and Soysal (1992).

Economic Framework. In general, within this framework, people think that, on the one hand, the parent/student, as well as the nation/state, seek more education in order to obtain better economic returns; and on the other hand, the improvement of economic level, either on the side of the nation/state or on the side of the parent/student will provide them with better material condition to pursue more education and therefore result in educational expansion. In other words, economic wealth is both an endpoint

and a starting point for the expansion of education.

Relevant to the explanation of educational expansion, two important theories, human capital theory and screening/signaling theory, can be considered to belong to this framework. The former theory argues that a growing demand for labor's skills and productivity increases the individual's monetary returns to investment in education, or in human capital, and therefore people should pursue more education unless the productivity of investing in education is equal or less than that of investing in elsewhere. In short, education expands in response to an increasing market for skilled workers (Schultz 1961; Craig 1981). The latter modifies the human capital theory and argues that the education attainment is mainly used by both employers and job seekers to predict and signal those job applicants' potential productivity and suitability. Hence, to the extent the screening is institutionalized, the returns to educational attainment are raised and the levels of enrollment increased (Spencer 1973; Collins 1979).

Political-Cultural Framework. Within this framework, people argue that, for the parent/student, they seek more education in order to improve their family's cultural and social opportunities, status and prestige; for the nation/state, they expand education because education can maintain social cohesion, inculcate ideology, guide citizen's behavior, and improve political integration.

Three major theories are related to or within this framework. One is cultural capital theory. According to this theory, individual increments of cultural capital denote increases in life chances and have positive influences on his social mobility (Bidwell 1989; Guthrie, Garms, & Pierce, 1988). The second is social control theory. From the standpoint of this theory, schooling can greatly contribute to the development of industrious working class and docile citizens by inculcating desirable attitudes, values, and behaviors, such as individuals' punctuality, discipline, responsibility, respect for others and subordination to authority, and commitment to society and community, which are most important to the well-being of modern industrial societies. Therefore, the industrialization and modernization should result in educational expansion (Young

1971; Inkeles, & Simth 1974; Bourdieu , & Passeron 1977). The third is political integration theory, which stresses the allocative and legitimating effects of education. It argues that it is in the interests of political elites/rulers to expand education as a means of integration with national political cultures or as a means of creating such cultures to ensure the stability and legitimacy of a national political regime. Therefore, the emergence and consolidation of the nation/state should result in the expansion of education (Meyer, & Rubinson 1975; Fiala, & Lanford 1987).

Supply-Demand Framework. On the basis of an extensive review of the literature of educational expansion, Craig (1981) presented a general analytic model which, in some sense, can be roughly termed as supply-demand framework. Craig classified the theories reviewed by him into two groups: those focusing on the provision of education and those focusing on the demand. He argued that school enrollment patterns were governed by the action at both the corporate (on the supply side) and the primary (on the demand side) levels. According to him, education expands because more education is sought either by corporate actors (mainly nations, states, etc.), by primary actors (mainly households), or by both. Although the costs and benefits of education may vary from place to place and from time to time, both supply and demand sides seek more education in the expectation of positive returns (also see Archer, 1982).

Population-Diffusion Framework. This framework is closely related to Meyer, et al.'s study. In a well-known study, Meyer, Ramirez, Rubinson, & Boli-Bennett (1977), by using cross-national data from 1950 to 1970, concluded that cross-national difference in levels of economic, political, and social development did not adequately explain the massive postwar expansion of national educational systems. Rather, between 1950 and 1970 education has expanded everywhere as a function of the available population to be educated and of the level of education existing in 1950s. For this reason, they thought the process of educational expansion was self-generating or automatic.

Two diffusion models were employed in Meyer, et al.'s descriptive models of "self-generating": a model of contagion and a model of diffusion from a constant source. The

former implies that education expands into the previously uneducated sectors of the population at a rate determined by the original proportion of educated people, and the latter means that the education expands at a rate determined by the size of the previously uneducated people. Actually, this is a reason that we term this theory as population-diffusion framework, though their explanation has been further elaborated and clarified since then. A recent example is the study of "World Expansion of Mass Education, 1870 - 1980", in which Meyer, Ramirez, and Soysal (1992) further claimed that the expansion of mass education, once formed, was endemic throughout the period, and in the 1870-1940 period, the expansion of education followed a logistic (S-shape) diffusion, and after World War II, the same process continued, but an added force that applied everywhere gained strength - as if the world society itself was playing an immediately directive role; and the rate of entry into the world of mass education is affected little by such properties of a national society as urbanization, racial or religious composition, independence, or even the existence of a compulsory rule. Instead, the rate is strongly affected by structural location in the world society.

It is interesting to note that not only the above explanations by different researchers were different, but also the approaches they employed were different. For example, in the studies mentioned above, Craig mainly used a qualitative approach; yet Meyer and his colleagues mainly employed a quantitative one.

With the above theoretical frameworks in mind, now we turn to examine the process of educational expansion in China since 1949 to 1995.

THE EXPANSION OF EDUCATION IN CHINA

Researchers, especially international ones, often find that one of the most difficult things in studying Chinese education is to get complete and accurate statistical information (e.g., see Peng, 1995). Actually, it seems to be a main reason that Meyer, et al.'s and Craig's studies excluded China. This fact is not only because there were fewer interchanges between China and the outside, but also because statistical industry did not

receive enough attention and less work was done in this field in China, though the situation has been changed somewhat since the 1980s.

Fortunately, in this study, the official national statistical data on the enrollment rate in every year from 1949 to 1995, except in 1949-1951 and in 1966-1973, are available (see Table 1). Needless to say, we shall use those official statistics because no other resources with better quality of data could be found.

Table 1

The enrollment rates of primary school-age children in China from 1949 to 1995.

Year	Enrollment rate[a] (%)	Change of the rate	Year	Enrollment rate[a] (%)	Change of the rate
1949	-	-	**1973**	-	-
1950	-	-	**1974**	94.2[b]	-
1951	-	-	**1975**	96.8	2.6
1952	49.2	-	**1976**	97.1	.3
1953	50.3	1.1	**1977**	96.5	-.6
1954	51.5	1.2	**1978**	95.5	-1.0
1955	53.8	2.3	**1979**	94.0	-1.5
1956	62.6	8.8	**1980**	93.9	-.1
1957	61.7	-.9	**1981**	93.0	-.9
1958	80.3	18.6	**1982**	93.2	.2
1959	79.3	-1.0	**1983**	94.0	.8
1960	76.4	-2.9	**1984**	95.3	1.3
1961	63.4	-13.0	**1985**	96.0	.7
1962	56.1	-7.3	**1986**	96.4	.4
1963	57.0	.9	**1987**	97.2	.8
1964	71.1	14.1	**1988**	97.2	0
1965	84.7	13.6	**1989**	97.4	.2
1966	-	-	**1990**	97.8	.6
1967	-	-	**1991**	97.8	0
1968	-	-	**1992**	97.2	-.6
1969	-	-	**1993**	97.7	.5
1970	-	-	**1994**	98.4	.6
1971	-	-	**1995**	98.5	.1
1972	-	-			

Sources: 1. The National Bureau of Statistics of China: *Statistical Yearbook of China (1993)*, Beijing: The Statistics Press of China, 1993, p. 726; 2. The Editorial Board of The Educational Yearbook of China: *The Educational Yearbook of China (1949-1981)*, Beijing: The Great Encyclopedia Press of China, 1984, p. 1024; 3. The National Bureau of Statistics of China: "The Statistical Bulletin of National Economy and Social Development of the Year 1993", *Xin Hua Wen Zhai*, April, 1994, pp. 47-51; 4. The National Bureau of Statistics of China: "The Statistical Bulletin of National Economy and Social Development of the Year 1994", *People's Daily (overseas edition)*, March 2, 1995. 5. The National Bureau of Statistics of China. "The Statistical Bulletin of National Economy and Social Development of the Year 1995", *People's Daily (overseas edition)*, March 5, 1996.

Note: [a] The official statistics on the enrollment rates in 1949-1951 and 1966-1973 are not available. [b] Source 1, *Statistical Yearbook of China (1993)*, and Source 2, *The Educational Yearbook of China (1949-1981)*, contain different enrollment rates from 1975 to 1980, and the latter claims its data are 1 to 2 percentage less than actual data because of lacking some provincial, autonomous regions' and municipalities' complete statistics and the data in the former resource fit the claim, we therefore use the data given by the former source in those years in the table. For the year 1974, Source 1 does not contain the data of that year; here the data is obtained by adding the rate presented in Source 2 and the average difference of the data in Source 1 and that in Source 2 from 1975 to 1980.

Since there has been no official statistics on the enrollment rates from 1949 to 1951 and from 1966 to 1973 because of lacking such statistical activities in those years, some kind of substitution or estimation is necessary, especially for the period of 1966-1973, during which dramatic changes happened in almost every aspect of the national life because of "the Cultural Revolution".

There are several ways in which various available data can be utilized to estimate (predict) the enrollment rates. Here I mainly use the data of student enrollments and the statistical model of linear regression to obtain the estimations of 1949-1951 and 1966-1973. All quoted data below, except those indicated as the estimations, are from Chinese national official statistics.

Table 2 shows the statistical data on the student enrollments from 1949 to 1995, as well as the enrollment rates from 1952 to 1965 and from 1974 to 1995.

Table 2

The enrollments of primary schools in China from 1949 to 1995 and the enrollment rates from 1952 to 1965 and 1974 to 1995.

Year	Enrollment (in millions)	Enrollment rate	Year	Enrollment (in millions)	Enrollment rate
1949	24,391	-	**1973**	135,704	-
1950	28,924	-	**1974**	144,814	94.2
1951	43,154	-	**1975**	150,941	96.8
1952	51,100	49.2	**1976**	150,055	97.1
1953	51,664	50.3	**1977**	146,176	96.5
1954	51,218	51.5	**1978**	146,240	95.5
1955	53,126	53.8	**1979**	146,629	94.0
1956	63,466	62.6	**1980**	146,270	93.9
1957	64,283	61.7	**1981**	143,328	93.0
1958	86,403	80.3	**1982**	139,720	93.2
1959	91,179	79.3	**1983**	135,780	94.0
1960	93,791	76.4	**1984**	135,571	95.3
1961	75,786	63.4	**1985**	133,702	96.0
1962	69,239	56.1	**1986**	131,825	96.4
1963	71,575	57.0	**1987**	128,359	97.2
1964	92,945	71.1	**1988**	125,358	97.2
1965	116,209	84.7	**1989**	123,731	97.4
1966	103,417	-	**1990**	122,414	97.8
1967	102,443	-	**1991**	121,642	97.8
1968	100,363	-	**1992**	122,013	97.2
1969	100,668	-	**1993**	124,212	97.7
1970	105,280	-	**1994**	128,226	98.4
1971	112,112	-	**1995**	131,950	98.5
1972	125,492	-			

To estimate the enrollment rates from 1949 to 1951, I employ two data sets - the primary school enrollments and the corresponding enrollment rates from 1952 to 1958 -

in Table 2 and obtain the following linear regression model:

$$y = .000848153\,x + 7.444$$

where x, the independent variable, is the student enrollment, and y, the dependable variable, is the enrollment rate. Table 3 includes both the estimated data (with label "*") by using this model and the corresponding 95% prediction intervals for those years. Figure 1 presents graphically these estimated (predicted) figures.

Table 3

Estimated primary school enrollment rates in China from 1949 to 1951.

Year	Enrollment (in millions)	Enrollment rate (%)	95% prediction interval (%)
1949	24,391	28.1*[a]	(24.5, 31.8)
1950	28,924	32.0*	(28.4, 35.6)
1951	43,154	44.0*	(40.4, 47.6)

[a] it has been claimed that the enrollment rate in 1949 was about 20%(e.g., see The Editorial Board of The Educational Yearbook of China, 1984, p. 125). However, no source of the data or the method of estimation have been reported.

Figure 1. The 95% prediction limits for student enrollment rates in China from 1949 to 1951

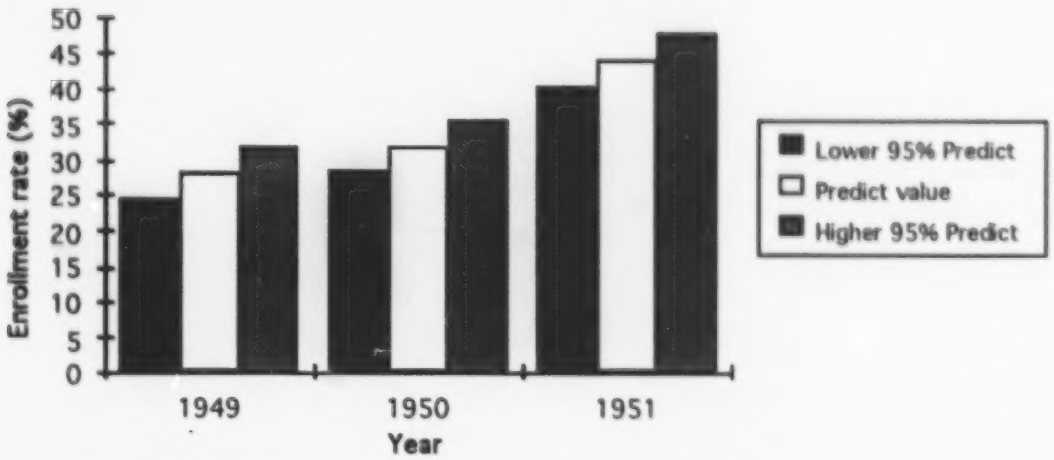


Table 4 shows the statistical data on the numbers of primary schools between 1949 to 1952. The school numbers are certainly related, though not equal, to the enrollment level of primary school-age children. The table from one angle supports the estimations

reported above. We can deduce with less doubt that the enrollment rate should have increased in those years.

Table 4

The numbers of primary schools in China between 1949 to 1952

Year	No. of primary schools (in thousands)
1949	346.8
1950	383.6
1951	501.1
1952	527.0

Source: The Editorial Board of The Educational Yearbook of China: *The Educational Yearbook of China (1949-1981)*, Beijing: The Great Encyclopedia Press of China, 1984, p. 1021.

From 1966 to 1973 is a key period. It is not only because this period is much longer than the period of 1949-1951 and therefore the picture of the expansion of education in China for the last 46 years will be quite incomplete without this period, but because it is a most important period in the history of the new China, and provides a very valuable window to observe how the dramatic change of the whole society affects the pattern of the expansion of education. Nonetheless, as far as we know, little work has been done and reported about the estimation of the student enrollment rates in this period.[1]

I basically employ the same method as used earlier to estimate the enrollment rates for those years so we can also keep consistence of methodology. From the data of both the primary school enrollments and the enrollment rates from 1961 to 1965 and from 1974 to 1979 in Table 2, we establish the linear regression model as follows

$$y = 0.000484962\ x + 24.62$$

Similarly, x is the independent variable, standing for the student enrollment, and y is the dependable variable, the enrollment rate. The estimated data (with label "*") from this model and the corresponding 95% prediction intervals are displayed in Table 5.

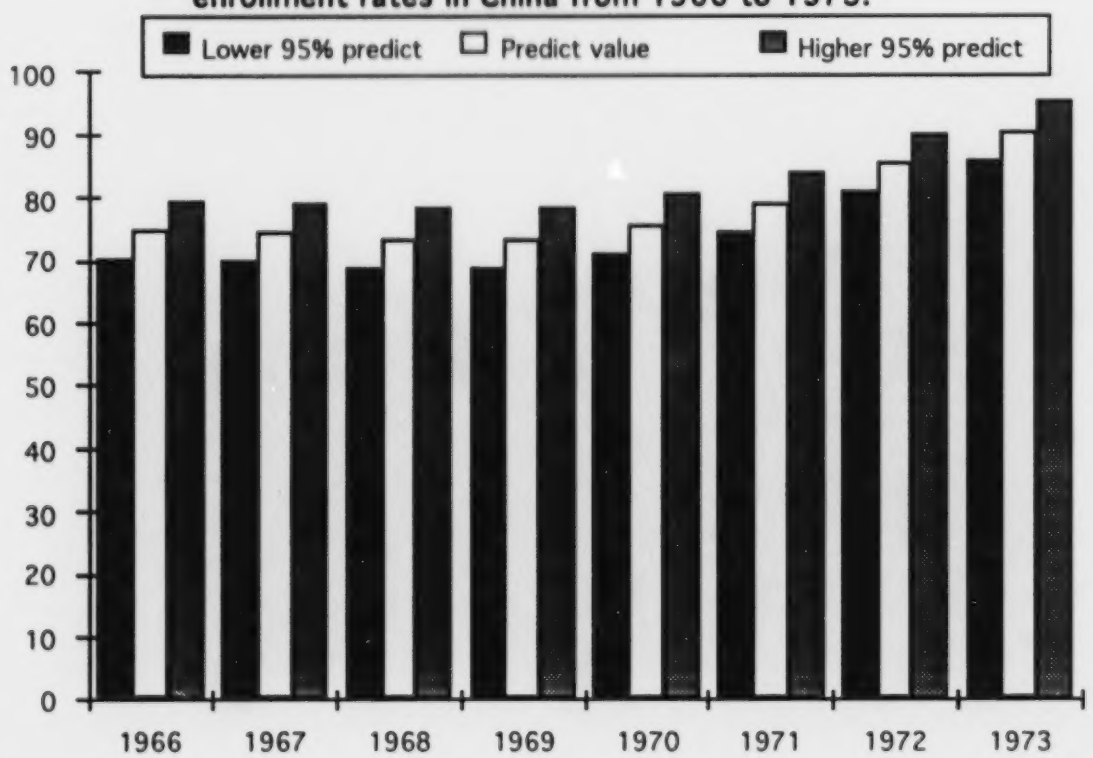
Table 5

Estimated primary school enrollment rates in China from 1966 to 1973.

Year	Enrollment of primary school (in millions)	Enrollment rate (%)	95% prediction interval (%)
1966	103,417	74.8*	(70.1, 79.5)
1967	102,443	74.3*	(69.7, 79.0)
1968	100,363	73.3*	(68.6, 78.0)
1969	100,668	73.4*	(68.7, 78.1)
1970	105,280	75.7*	(71.0, 80.3)
1971	112,112	77.9*	(74.3, 83.6)
1972	125,492	85.5*	(80.8, 90.1)
1973	135,704	90.4*	(85.7, 95.1)

Figure 2 presents the 95% prediction limits for enrollment rates in this period.

Figure 2. The 95% prediction limits for student enrollment rates in China from 1966 to 1973.



The data in Table 6 show the changes of the available official statistics of primary schools and that of primary school students between 1965 to 1974. Comparing those two kinds of changes with the changes that revealed by our estimation in the last column, we can see that the general trends are well consistent. It to some degree suggests that our overall estimation is quite dependable. The only difference is that while the number of the primary schools reached the bottom level in 1969, the number of primary school students and the estimated enrollment rates in that year was very slightly more than the previous year.

Table 6

The numbers of primary schools and students, and the enrollment rate in China between 1965 to 1974

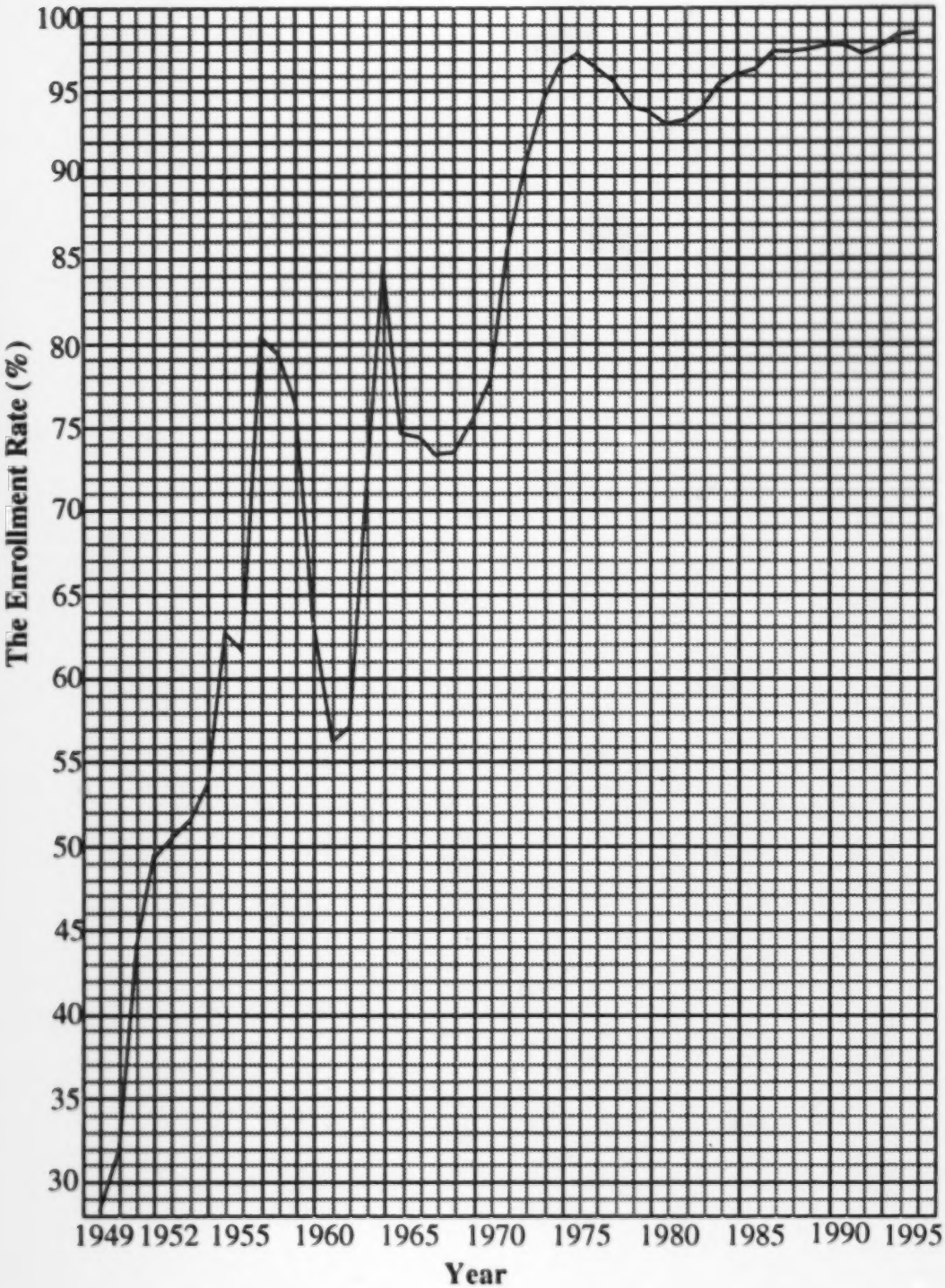
Year	No. of primary schools (in thousands)	Enrollment (in millions)	The enrollment rate (%)
1965	1681.9	116,209	84.7
1966	1007.0	103,417	74.8*
1967	964.2	102,443	74.3*
1968	940.6	100,363	73.3*
1969	915.7	100,668	73.4*
1970	961.1	105,280	75.7*
1971	968.5	112,112	77.9*
1972	1009.2	125,492	85.5*
1973	1031.7	135,704	90.4*
1974	1053.3	144,814	94.2

Source: The Editorial Board of The Educational Yearbook of China: *The Educational Yearbook of China (1949-1981)*, Beijing: The Great Encyclopedia Press of China, 1984, p. 1021.

By the way, the correlation coefficients between the enrollments and enrollment rates with the above two estimation models are .995 and .994 respectively[2], nearly perfect. Hence, we believe these models should be very reasonable and dependable.

According to the data we examined above, Figure 3 graphically depicts the general picture of the growth of the enrollment rate in China.

Figure 3. The growth of the enrollment rate of primary school-age children in China from 1949-1995.



From Figure 3, we can see that, as a whole, the pattern of the expansion of

education in China from 1949 to 1995 is very irregular and dramatic. Below I shall briefly discuss the economic, political, public (educational) policy and other social factors that largely affected the pattern of educational expansion in China.

DISCUSSION AND EXPLANATION

Figure 3 and our previous examination reveal that the expansion of education in China has passed through several obviously different periods. Table 7 concludes the general patterns in those different periods.

Table 7

The general pattern of educational expansion in China in different periods: 1949-1995.

Period	Increase (+) or decrease (-)	Total change rate[b]	Average change rate[c]	Degree of change
1949-1958[a]	+	185.8%	20.6%	most dramatically
1958-1962	-	-30.1%	-7.5%	very dramatically
1962-1965	+	51.0%	17%	most dramatically
1965-1969[a]	-	-15.4%	-3.8%	dramatically
1969-1976	+	32.3%	4.6%	dramatically
1976-1981	-	-4.2%	-0.8%	not dramatically
1981-1995[a]	+	5.9%	0.4%	not dramatically

Note: [a] There was one exception during the period, that is, in 1957, 1969 and 1992, respectively, there was a small change that is in opposite direction to the whole trend in the corresponding period. [b] the total change rate is $\frac{\text{"The enrollment rate of the last year - The enrollment rate of the first year"}}{\text{"The enrollment rate of the first year"}}$. [c] the average change rate is $\frac{\text{"The total change rate"}}{\text{"The number of years in the period"}}$.

1949-1958

In September, 1949, *The Common Guidelines of The People's Political Consultative Conference of China*, which was formulated under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and prepared for the foundation of a new China, stated that new

China would "adopt universal education with plan and step by step" (The Editorial Board of The Educational Yearbook of China, 1984, p.123). During the period of the national economic recovery from 1949-1952, the educational policy of the new government focused on recovering, stabilizing, adjusting and reorienting the old primary schools and modestly encouraged locals and ordinary people to establish new, including public, private, and collective, schools. The poor and lower people's political and economic right and demand were respected and protected. Especially, peasants got the land during the movement of the "Land Revolution"; and their living standards increased. As a result, the growth of the enrollment rate was very quickly, from about 28.1% in 1949 to 49.2% in 1952.

Between 1953 to 1955, a new policy stressing the improvement of educational quality rather than the quantity was adopted. Private and collective schools (called "people-run schools") were still allowed to open but with more limitations. The result was, as we can see from Figure 3, that the enrollment rate increased slowly, only 4.6% in those three years. Meanwhile, the economy developed quickly (The National Bureau of Statistics of China, 1991, p. 33). Thus, it seems that the national educational policy was the main factor affecting the change of the enrollment rate in those years.

At the end of 1955, the Ministry of Education decided that the main policy of education in 1956 was "accelerating development, improving the quality, universally designing, and strengthening the leadership". This policy was adopted in practice and the result was that the growth of enrollment rate was indeed greatly accelerated with an increase of 8.8% in 1956, reaching the fastest pace since 1949. From that point, the enrollment rate declined slightly in the following year is probably because the growth in 1956 was too fast, outrunning the growth of economy.

The year 1958 is a very unusual year in the history of new China. In that year, Chairman Mao Zhedong launched "the Great Leap Forward" movement, which is now well believed to have been much beyond the practical condition, in the whole nation with the hope of accelerating the national development. Under such a special

background, the CPC and the Central Government required that the whole nation should basically have universal primary education within 3 to 5 years (The Editorial Board of The Educational Yearbook of China, 1984, pp. 688-690). To this end, the government introduced the policy of so-called "walking on two legs" and "two-track systems" under which the state runs the regular schools, while factories, enterprises, rural communities are encouraged to build and operate "half-work and half-study" schools. As a result, the enrollment rate increased most dramatically, 18.6% more than the pervious year.

1958-1962

Since the end of 1958, the CPC began to correct the impractical policies of "the Great Leap Forward" movement, though it did not openly admit that the movement was a mistake until 1980s. At the beginning of 1959, the CPC decided that the major policy of education was "consolidation, adjustment, and improvement". In 1961, it reemphasized that policy. Meanwhile, because of the "Great Leap Forward" and the serious natural disaster (especially in 1960-62, which is called "the three natural disaster years" in the modern Chinese history), the national economy begun to decline and reached its bottom in 1962. Table 8 shows the data of the national income from 1959 to 1965.

Table 8

Indexes of the national income in China between 1959 to 1965 (the index in 1952 = 100)

Year	National Income	Change
1959	202.0	
1960	199.1	-2.9
1961	144.0	-55.1
1962	130.9	-13.1
1963	144.9	14.0
1964	168.8	23.9
1965	197.4	28.6

Source: The National Bureau of Statistics of China: *Statistical Yearbook of China (1991)*, Beijing: The Statistics Press of China, 1991, p. 33.

In such a social context, the enrollment rate declined precipitously after 1959, especially during the three natural disaster years of 1960-1962, and reached its deep bottom in 1962, the very same year that the national income also reached its bottom. Therefore, we can obviously argue that the decline was mainly the result of the bad economic background. As to the public policy, we think it reveals that the educational policy adopted in 1958 rather than in 1959 and thereafter was not adequate, since the policy in the latter years was largely a reaction and adjustment to that in the former year because of the rapid change of economic condition.

1962-1965

As is shown in Table 8, the national economy fast recovered after 1962. Along with the economic development, the Ministry of Education required the whole country further implement the policy of "walking on two legs" and to actively increase the number of primary schools, especially "simple-conditioned" schools, in order to enroll more peasants' children. Consequently, the enrollment rate grew very quickly. In 1965, it reached 84.4% , and among all national primary school pupils, 21.7% were those in rural work-study schools (The Editorial Board of The Educational Yearbook of China, 1984, p.126). The influence of economy and educational policy on the growth of enrollment rate were strong.

1965-1969

Like 1958, the year 1966 is another very unusual year in China. In the middle of that year, Chairman Mao launched the movement of "the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution", which he even thought to be one of the most important things he did in his lifetime (the other is the foundation of the new China). At any rate, the influence of "the Cultural Revolution" on almost every aspect of China, including the economic, political, ideological, cultural, as well as educational was immeasurable in terms of both space and time, although it is now believed by the CPC, the Government, and many people to

be a serious disaster to the country (The Editorial Board of The Educational Yearbook of China, 1984, pp. 1-24).

Three major factors during this period affected the change of the enrollment rate. First, from 1966 to 1969, "the Cultural Revolution" resulted in a great social disorder in the whole country. Many institutions, including the Ministry of Education and many other educational administrative authorities were criticized, disturbed, and even disbanded by "the Red Guard" and other social forces (this is one most important reason that a lot of statistics about those years are not available). Many schools stopped regular operation for a long time because of the disorder, and even no higher educational institutions enrolled new students during those four years. Second, the national economy was seriously damaged, and the national income decreased considerably in 1967 and 1968. Third, many state-run primary schools in many rural areas and some cities were reassigned to be supported by local resources instead of the national resources as it was the case previously.

The dramatic political change and social turbulence, along with its negative effect on economic development, resulted in the decline of enrollment rate considerably.

1969-1976

Since 1969, Chairman Mao and the CPC begun to be aware the necessity of putting "the Cultural Revolution" under control and tried to maintain the normal order of the society, and for this purpose in part, CPC held its ninth national congress in that year. The social stability and normality was gradually recovered in the whole nation. The government again emphasized the policy of universal primary education, as Premier Zhou Enlai said in 1971, "this is a major policy" (The Editorial Board of The Educational Yearbook of China, 1984, p. 123). In 1974, the State Council adopted a new policy to universalize ten-year education in big and middle cities and seven-year education in advanced rural areas. The political ideology of Chairman Mao that all children of poor, lower and middle peasants and working class should have opportunity to go to school was largely

followed. Meanwhile, the national income continued to grow up except in 1976, in which there was a slight down turn.

The result is, as discussed above, the enrollment rate increased from 75.7% in 1970 to 97.1%, a very high level, in 1976.

When one views the influence of social and political factors on the growth of the enrollment rate in the latter period of "the Cultural Revolution", it is important to remember that although adopting universal and equal primary as well as second education became a priority in the governmental policies, it was not in the interest of economy, but based on the political ideology.

1976-1981

The year 1976 experienced the death of Chairman Mao and the end of "the Cultural Revolution". Since 1977, the economy has become the most important thing that the Chinese government and ordinary people care about. Politics, unlike in "the Cultural Revolution" as the center in the national and people's life, has been devalued. The level of educational development was required to match the level of, and to serve, economic development. The quality of education was again preferred over the quantity.

As the schools, especially regular (academic) high schools, increased too fast during the latter period of "the Cultural Revolution", a large number of them, mainly regular high schools, were closed or consolidated into other schools. The total number of those high schools almost halved, decreased from 201, 268 in 1977 to 106, 718 in 1981(The Editorial Board of The Educational Yearbook of China, 1984, p. 1000). At the same time, the number of primary schools decreased about 15%, from 1, 044, 300 to 894, 100. Accompanied is the decrease of the enrollment rate of primary schools. The decline rate was rather slow but stable, even though the economy developed faster than before.

1981-1995

The most striking characteristic of China in the last over 10 years is that the national economy grew rapidly. From 1981 to 1991, the average growth rate of the national

income was 8.9%, and after 1991, it was more than 10%. The continuous growth of economy provided a relative good material condition to support the expansion of education.

The economic function of education was continually stressed. In 1985, the CPC proposed a new major educational policy, that is, education must serve to the construction of the socialism, and the construction of socialism must rely on education (Zhu Zuoren, 1987, p. 89).

In 1986, The Law of Compulsory Education of the People's Republic of China was passed. Primary education became compulsory and tuition-free. The policy of "walking on two legs" and "allowing social and private forces to operate (people-run) schools" were recovered. Private schools, which were strictly prohibited during "the Cultural Revolution", were also permitted to open and run. In addition, the main duty, as well as the right, to support (mainly in expenses) and run primary education was again assigned to local authorities.

Under such a context, the enrollment rate grew up steadily (except in 1992 with a very small down turn), but modestly. As the averaged rate of this period was 96.1% and the enrollment rate reached 98.5% in 1995. The ceiling influence seems to have appeared.

CONCLUSION

To end this paper, we have the following concluding remarks taking both the theoretical frameworks reviewed and our previous examination and discussion about the Chinese case into account.

First, it is important to notice that the CPC and its long time leader, Mao Zhedong, as well as the Central Government, which is absolutely under the leadership of the CPC, have had extremely powerful influence on the whole country and its people since the foundation of the new China in 1949. This political and social phenomenon is rarely seen in many other countries, especially in western capitalist countries. Thus, according

to Craig's supply-demand framework, the change of the enrollment rate in China was by and large determined by the supply of corporate actors, namely by the Government's behavior on education. The positions of the corporate actors and primary actors (people) in the educational supply-demand field (market) were considerably unequal. Compared with western countries operating relatively free market in education, this different and yet important characteristic of educational expansion in countries like China should not be ignored.

Second, while the importance and justification of universal primary education were never denied (it seems in this sense but only in this sense this phenomenon can be applied to Meyer, et al.'s explanation about the universality of educational expansion), the main purpose and priority of the expansion of education, as well as the factors affecting the pattern of the expansion, were neither single nor unchangeable in different periods of China. If we take economy, politics, and educational policy as three major relatively (certainly by no means absolutely) independent factors affecting the process of educational expansion in China, then, from our discussion earlier, we can roughly draw the following conclusion as presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Major factors affecting the expansion of education in different periods in China.

Period	Change	Major factors (in order of importance)
1949-58	+	**Educational policy**; Economy; Politics
1958-62	-	**Economy**; Educational Policy; Politics
1962-65	+	**Economy**; Educational Policy; Politics
1965-69	-	**Politics**; Economy; Educational Policy
1969-76	+	**Politics**; Educational Policy; Economy
1976-81	-	**Educational Policy**; Economy; Politics
1981-94	+	**Economy**; Educational Policy; Politics

In general, we can say that, from this Chinese case study, economy was the basic

condition for the expansion of education: the worsening of economy often accompanied the negative expansion, or "contraction", of education (e.g., in 1958-62, and 1965-68), and the role of public (educational) policy's role seemed minor at those times; however, its improving did not necessarily result in the positive expansion, and with given necessary condition of economy, the expansion of education largely depended on the educational policy (e.g., in 1970-76, and 1976-81). In addition, politics usually did not directly affect the expansion of primary education; however, extreme political environment like the dramatic political change and social turbulence of "the Cultural Revolution" (1966-69) could exert considerable effect on it.

Third, from the above table, it is clear that both economic and political (cultural) frameworks can help explain the process of the expansion of education in China in different periods and with different validity. However, no single particular model or theory can well explain the whole pattern of the expansion. From this point of view, it is necessary for us to employ an integrated approach and pay attention to the limitation of a specific theory for accounting for the expansion of education under different social context and time background. An omnipotent explanation seems impossible; hence any oversimplification and over-generalization should be carefully avoided.

Fourth, from the pattern shown in Figure 3, it is apparent that the expansion of education in China since 1949 did not follow a logistic diffusion model as Meyer, et al. found elsewhere. The process of expansion in China was by no means "self-generating" or "automatic". As we mentioned earlier, it is greatly related to the change of the economy, politics, educational policy and other social factors.

Finally, although from this case study we believe that some major theories about the expansion of education basically based on the observation of western countries seem not well applicable to the Chinese case, we can not say at the same time that explanations drawn from China will well apply to other countries. From this point, more interchanges and cooperation to seek further knowledge and better understanding of the expansion of education among international scholars in this field are still needed.

Notes

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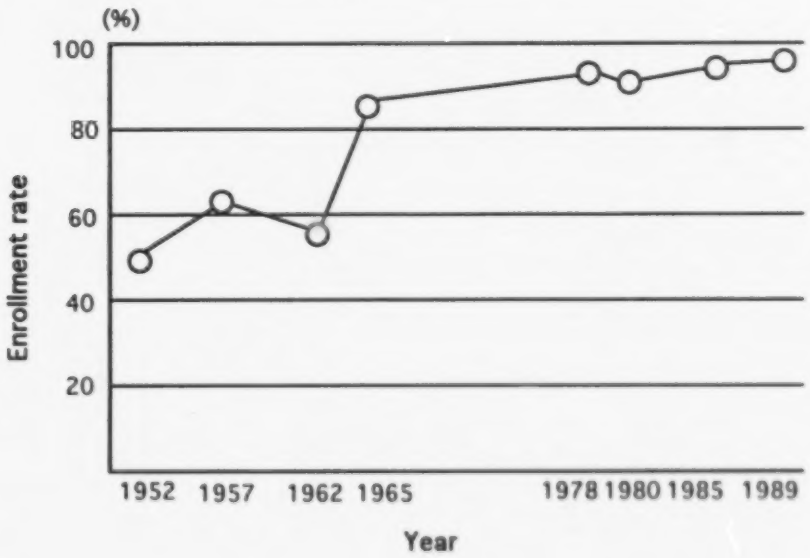
1. One publication we found is the book of *China Report* , in which the curve of the enrollment rates from 1949 to 1989 is graphed as below:

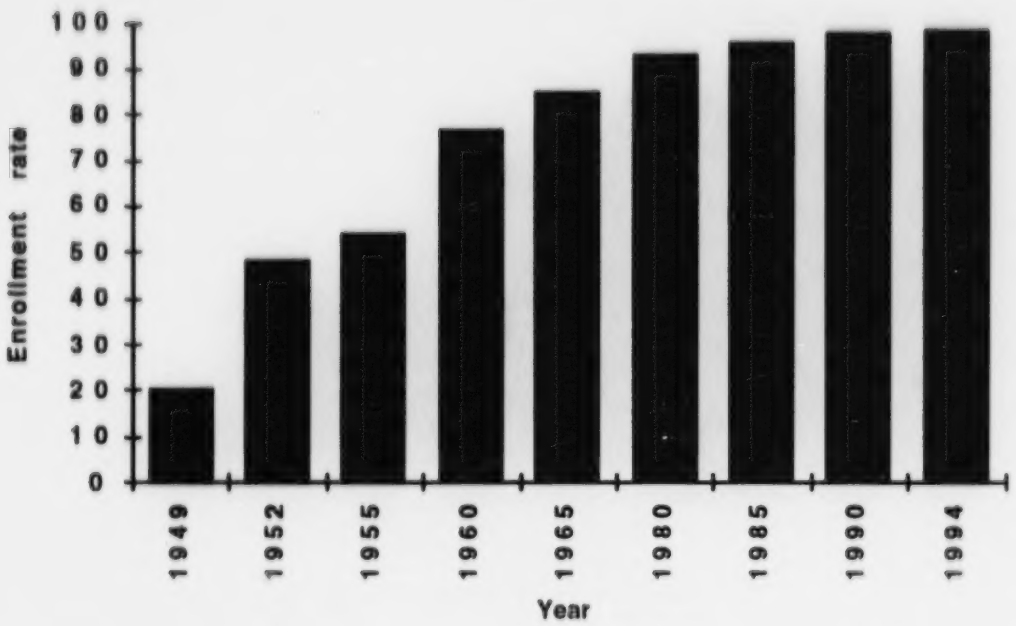


Source: Chinese Statistical Information and Service Center: *China Report (Social and Economic Development, 1949-1989)*, Taipei (Taiwan): Influxfunds Co. Ltd., Zie Yonger Co. Ltd., & Commonwealth Publishing Co. Ltd., 1990, p. 417.

It is obvious that the author(s) of that book simply assumed that the change of the enrollment rate from 1965 to 1978 was smooth and linear, our following estimation and examination reveal that this assumption is rather oversimplified and misleading as it ignores dramatic changes of the enrollment rate and the social context of education during "the Cultural Revolution".

A recent related publication is *Educational Atlas of China*, which graphically describe the data in a number years from 1949 to 1994 (see below). Again, it is quite misleading in a sense.

Figure: Net primary school enrollment rate in China: 1949 to 1994



Source: *Educational Atlas of China*, Shanghai, China: Shanghai Scientific and Technical Publishers, 1995, p. 30.

2. This is one reason why we use the relevant data from 1952 to 1958 in the first model, and that from 1961 to 1965 and from 1974 to 1979 in the second model. Another reason is the demographic factor, for example, because China introduced the policy of family plan since the early 1970s, the primary school student enrollments began to decrease since the later 1970s, and the year 1979 is a turning point for this change, see Table 2.

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